

The Queer Aut of Failure: Cripistemic Openings for Postgraduate Life

by [\[sarah\] Cavar](#) | [Issue 11.2 \(Fall 2022\)](#), [Crip Pandemic Life: A Tapestry](#)

ABSTRACT I, a Mad, autistic, multiply-disabled person, began my PhD in Cultural Studies in September of 2020. I started to make my home in graduate school during the COVID-19 pandemic, fully online, and I've excelled, calling into question normative assumptions of in-person socialization, education, and collaboration as superior to their virtual counterparts. In this article, I reflect on the cripistemic *pedagogies of failure* that facilitated a neuroqueered and *transMaddened* transition to Zoom-based graduate life. I will also consider email, text messages, and video calls as equalizing mediums in which both formal *and* fugitive spaces can open for queercrip collaboration across borders, timezones, and access needs. Lastly, I will tell the stories of technological "failures" that I have experienced—miscommunications, failing internet, time delays—as generative possibilities rather than indictments of a non-normative learning. Necessarily imperfect and rife with humorous, intriguing, and profoundly human failures, as well as surprising and generative openings, pandemic education has ushered in new queercrip, transMad, ways of knowing and teaching that have uniquely benefitted me. Far from a circumscribed or lacking educational landscape, I argue, post-COVID academia is filled with pedagogical and epistemological openings, holes through which new disabled and Mad scholars, myself included, can make ourselves a beautifully imperfect home space. I invite you inside.

KEYWORDS [disability](#), [crip](#), [pedagogy](#), [neurodivergence](#), [madness](#)

I was an undergraduate in the doomed class of 2020, perhaps the most apologized-to demographic between March and May of 2020. By midsummer, we 2020 grads had worn out our collective grief, senior spring lost to a mysterious, deadly contagion, and I was thrilled at the arrival of some semblance of emotional solitude alongside my mailed Bachelor of Arts degree. Yet that solitude, if that was what to call that slight lull in presumed emotional devastation, would not last. In August, 2020, I moved from my childhood home in rural Connecticut, where I'd been living as a pandemic-recluse, to Davis, California, where I would begin my PhD coursework in Cultural Studies.

My courses that year were, of course, entirely online. So were my orientations, colloquia, and other events. My then-new roommate ended up spending most of the school year attending class from home, paying her half of the rent from afar while I remained in the apartment alone. With the exception of a handful of outdoor meetings with a member of my cohort who had also moved to Davis despite our virtual-only plans, I saw none of my program faculty nor any of my peers in person that year. I saw few students and faculty of any program, and when I did, it was mostly in passing, during my periodic treks to the Student Health Center for two tubes of testosterone gel in a brown paper bag (testosterone is considered a “controlled substance” and cannot be mailed). Apart from my outings to Student Health, the grocery store, and the post office, I was alone. My academic career was born shouting “can you hear me now?!” into a toasty laptop. Delivered to me coated in hand sanitizer.

With this development, the apologies crescendoed. Whereas I had previously been incredibly proud of my acceptance to the program, having overcome numerous barriers to be the first in my family to pursue a doctoral degree, I quickly learned that the proper response to the timing of my acceptance was not pride, but chagrin.¹ Yes, I was indeed a real PhD student. But I was a real PhD student whose realness remained contingent, in a state of not-quite not unlike the not-quiteness of my undergraduate graduation, for which I also received numerous apologies. It seemed I should have been grieving, that to be happy with Zoom University was an undesirable, even repulsive response. I had an acceptance, just as I had a diploma, and yet the spatiotemporal delay in which I was experiencing these realities—one form of what Ellen Samuels calls “crip time”—alone warranted a widespread, unsolicited, negative response.²

Two Types of Apologies I Have Received on Behalf of Zoom University

The presumed-response, grounded in neurotypical, abled, healthy, and sane norms around “acceptable” behavior and “reasonable” stimulus reaction, is always and already ableist. The two particular genres of apology I encountered in this specific case will be familiar to many disabled readers: pity and obliviousness. The former comes in the patronizing drone of the Nice Lady Therapist,³ whose simpering sweetness belies a commitment to dehumanization, and the latter in the refreshingly crass (though not necessarily desired) scoff of the Surprised Dude.

1. “Oh, I can’t even imagine. Oh, honey, that must be so tough.”

2. “Oh, *dude*. Fuck. I didn’t even think about — whoa, that’s a lot.”

I began to say, "It, uh, *is what it is*," in response to both the patronizing tone of (1) and stumbling, overcompensatory apologies of (2). This went over reasonably well; had people nodding in what I can only assume was a mixture of sympathy and pity and a little bit of scorn. *Imagine being the weird kid who decides to come straight to grad school in the middle of a pandemic!* I could hear them thinking, whether they expressed it with bald-faced pity or honest shock. Call that a "temporarily regained theory-of-mind" if you'd like.⁴ I call it "knowing that, if Zoom University is the joke, then I am the punchline."

Then, there's response three, which is not an apology, and which I am going to pretend that you, the reader of this volume, have offered me in response to the information I have just disclosed:

3. "Oh, that's right. How's it been going? What do you think so far?"

This is, by far, the best response, because it doesn't prescribe me an already-expected, chagrined response. It does not force me to act a part I do not believe in. Because truthfully, Zoom University is "actually pretty fine." I "actually kinda like it better than 'regular' school—not everything, of course, but it does offer me opportunities I wouldn't have IRL [in real life], you know?" And disabled colleagues nod, yes, I do know, and nondisabled colleagues also nod, if only out of politeness.

Don't get me wrong: Zoom PhD work is a failing enterprise. That is to say, it is a queercrip, transMad enterprise, which is to say, it is a beautiful, beautiful project. Mitchell, Snyder, and Ware describe such "fortunate failures" in the context of "curricular cripistemologies."⁵ Coined by Merri Lisa Johnson, the term "cripistemologies," refers to "embodied ways of knowing in relation, knowing-with, knowing-alongside, knowing-across-difference, and unknowing," ways which frequently exist outside the purview of mainstream academia.⁶ *Curricular* cripistemologies, then, refer to an intentional, queercrip deviation from normative pedagogical approaches which trades the corrective impulse of "special ed" and other rehabilitative programs, and offers instead a generative noncompliance.⁷ That is, rather than trying to identify, isolate, and ameliorate difference, curricular cripistemologies lean into difference as it is experienced by disabled students ourselves, querying how atmospheres of in/accessibility shape normative approaches to education and how the embrace of "failure," not as a last-resort but as a first choice, poses potentially transformative possibilities.

I first learned about Zoom about a year prior to the pandemic, when I began doing research with Dr. Alexandre Baril, of the University of Ottawa, from my home-base in Western Massachusetts. He had suggested Zoom ("it's like Skype, but glitches less") for an early meeting, and using it felt intuitive, if slightly obscure. No one around me had heard of it before, and, apart from rare video meetings with Dr. Baril, I didn't use it. In March of 2020, I

felt relieved to have had some exposure to the new intellectual/social hub-of-choice. I was already well-versed in remote research and collaboration, to “resorting” to the choppy and awkward medium of the visual call to engage in what “ought” (I was told) to be in-person conversation. As that weird, frightening COVID spring continued, I continued my research, working on a full-length creative project, an undergraduate honors thesis, and my project with Dr. Baril, the last of which would extend through the summer. For those months, my life followed a predictable, quiet routine: I would wake, make (too much) coffee, work, and read for pleasure. I would make a simple meal and then go on a walk around my neighborhood, which, in my hometown, was deserted enough to wander without a mask. Once home, I would take a hot shower, and then say hello to my mother when she arrived home from her (essential) job as the manager of a pharmacy. I worked and read into the night, a practice I later had to cease for the sake of my sleep schedule. It was a cloistered life, a privileged life, and a very small life. It was a life infused, yes, with overwhelming anxiety and deep, deep sadness, both of which lapped the edges of my consciousness (and sometimes overwhelmed it). It was a life in which my Madness, no longer concealed for the sake of decorum, emerged in its myriad Behaviors (if I am Mad, and only I can hear it, do I make a sound?). Yet it was also an expansive life, and my bodymind followed the patterns I had established in earlier periods of imposed limitation on what is possible: it squeezes, seizes, and wends its way through cracks in the “possible,” a pencil mark following a maze. I am best when I am left to my own devices. I will see new things with myself.

By the start of the academic year, I was used to being crazy and alone: this pair of words did not signify defeat for me, and I did not feel pathetic, but excited: I emailed professors, and even spoke to one on the phone. I set up my desk, perpendicular to the window, so that I could learn all day by natural light. My enthusiasm did not deflate upon my institutional introduction to this very “unprecedented” first year in these very “unprecedented” times. But the myriad apologies I received in response to the program’s failing, flagging, faltering educational plans—including from faculty and fellow students—began to feel akin to a doctor’s prognosis: you have a PhD program, and it isn’t looking good.

Jack Halberstam’s *The Queer Art of Failure*—to which this essay owes its title—queerly (re)defines failure as “ways of being and knowing that stand outside conventional understandings of success.”⁸ University discourse tends to paint Zoom University (ZU) as a failure, and, by extension, understands its practitioners to be failures, too. Professors told us from their little Zoom boxes, “everything sucks, just do what you can” (something I now also tell my current students, albeit from the front of a too-crowded in-person classroom), implying that, among myriad forms of violence embedded in life since COVID, “inferior” knowledges generated online counted among them. No one seems to be clear on what,

exactly, “inferior” means; the term seems readily moldable to whatever content digital spaces produce. In truth, I do not know where, exactly, Zoom invariably fails that the irl classroom succeeds at, apart from marginalizing particular groups of students—perhaps that, in and of itself, is deemed success. Regardless, the caveat, “well, it’s not the same as in-person . . . ” lifts heavy—application says it must bear twenty-five pounds or more—and turns into commonsense.

Halberstam’s call to look more closely at failure does not apply only to the thing that has failed, but also, and even primarily, to the societal mechanisms that produce success. When we fail, queerly, we might gaze at commonsensical assumptions from the underbelly of the beast. Parents of schoolchildren learned to ask, “why *can’t* I feed my child during class, why can’t my child eat in their own home?” Draconian policies policing childrens’ bodily functions were exposed in all their cruel absurdity in attempts to enforce them online. Failures of/to discipline poked holes in a carceral educational apparatus. Switching to Zoom made apparent pedagogical and epistemological holes previously concealed in in-person learning: an unnecessary reliance on face-to-face, synchronous instruction, which proved especially inadequate for some d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing students, whose IRL worlds do not come with instant captions. Ableist norms around verbal participation as a barometer for student competence proved insufficient, as reactions and chats—not to mention the informal, cripistemological backchannels through which I had and have engaging conversations with “silent” peers—opened us to new ways of *being and knowing* together.⁹

Sometimes, technologies *did* fail in that more typical way—in other words, they crapped out. In the summer of 2021, I took an online writing workshop, during which I was booted from Zoom several times for spontaneous software updates and internet lapses. I did not learn where the “raise hand” emoji was until the middle of that first year, meaning that I Zoomed in a patently autistic style: poorly estimating natural conversational pauses, cutting in at inopportune moments, circling “backward” to points amid desire for conversational progress. I was frequently overwhelmed by the desire to intervene in a conversation, to follow my thought-train for minutes or paragraphs. While I sometimes stumbled in verbally expressing my racing thoughts—you try reading accurately from a speeding train car!—I quickly found a refuge in the chat function, and even in texting classmates outside the Zoom app. In an especially generative class, I’d be writing emails, cross-referencing readings, and in multiple text/Zoom chat conversations at the same time. While I (and my lagging internet) didn’t always time my verbal interventions correctly, the new modes of communication Zoom afforded me were eye-opening. I wouldn’t even describe them as “making up for” some “lost” IRL communication. I have no truck with discourses of lack.¹⁰ Zoom’s particular communicative functions simply entered my life and opened some doors.

In short, Zoom's neuroqueer(ed) functionalities facilitated my own communicative abilities, not by normalizing them in accordance with existing standards, but providing entirely new and entirely necessary paths. Functioning means something different on Zoom. Think about phrases like, "use the chat function," or "use the hand-raise function." These are functions which facilitate access for those deemed typically "nonfunctional." For example, philosophy PhD student Jennifer Nicole Foster (@philoso_foster) tweets:

if this last year on Zoom has taught me anything it's that running participant chats dramatically improve Q&As and I hope we continue to use them in in-person talks

the collaborativeness—"yeah, like X says in the chat"; the crowdsourcing citations, the chance to clarify or mention something that's not worth a full "hand", the ability to *get* something clarified without distracting the speaker, the increased accessibility—it's just so good.¹¹

Likewise, scholar and activist Cy (@jillianweise) tweeted, in response to a question about how others had changed throughout the pandemic, "I wasn't myself on social [media] until July 2020. The pandemic coerced me into being 'myself' instead of heteronym, pseudonym, anon acct. So it was kinda like not existing. And I did it for safety reasons. It was fine."¹² In both instances, what was understood pre-pandemic to constitute "real life" failed to accomplish its stated aim: realness. Foster's account points to the emergence of genuine and committed participation in the learning process via Zoom specifically, as well as a newfound ability to ask questions and enter into scholarly dialogues previously inaccessible. For Cy, the jump from "real" to "virtual" life facilitated self-realization on social media, the removal of barriers between the self Cy lived offline and the self Cy was online. While the linear progression from anonymous online account to one featuring "real" personal details is not always needed or desired. For many, the fusion of the online and offline worlds shifted the terrain of the real and facilitated newfound crip authenticities.

As a Mad, autistic scholar, I am a collector. No. I am more ragged than a collector. I am what rhetorician and poet-educator Stacey Waite termed a "scavenger." Scavenging, Waite explains, is a practice with the ability to "[disrupt] ways of knowing that seem dominant, taken for granted, or obvious and by valuing contradiction—what we might also call messiness, fragmentation, or even confusion."¹³ When Zoom glitches, when our professor freezes and then winks off the screen, I get to know my classmates in ways impossible IRL. We joke in the chat; voices that had until now not spoken up ask the professor's name in hesitant tones. In the chat, I explain a word to someone unfamiliar with the field; a friend sends the link to a related article I might like. Sometimes we undertalk whole conversations—how's your family, your partner, your work? I scavenge, pluck details and citations from lectures and discussions, stringing them together in the cripistemic backchannels of Zoom, Messenger, social media. When my camera is off, I write a poem. I mute myself and everyone else when the noise is just-too-much, and I sit and watch ten little mouths move

in silence, gathering what is said from intermittent messages and screen-shared slides. Sometimes I miss things, though I miss less than I did when bombarded by unwanted sound. More often, on Zoom, I miss nothing. I gain.

Once, when the Zoom app failed on me mid-class, a friend and colleague relayed to me the contents of the class discussion via text. "We all miss you," she said, and I missed them all, because I had been excited about the topic. I ultimately intervened via text, secondhand, my classmate copying and pasting my texts into the group chat and letting me know what others responded. When Zoom queers, crips, craps out on us, losing its characteristic functionalities, it offers us opportunities, too—opportunities regularly penalized and vilified in the IRL classroom. While crucial in an environment of inevitable tech-failure, these alternatives are also not mere opportunities to turn "failure" into "success." They are ways to locate in failure precious intimacies, surrogacies of thought and emotion, delicate cripistemological in(ter)ventions.

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Above, I use the word "functionalities" deliberately, in order to draw attention to discourses of functioning that continue to pervade popular understandings of autism, and of mental disability in broad terms. These discourses, even more commonsensical than those aforementioned COVID caveats, render the "low-functioning" disabled person, less able to comply with the demands of neoliberal capitalism, as an inferior class of person to their high-functioning (and conditionally compliant) counterparts. The logics of functioning labels are entirely contingent upon this conditional compliance: the high-functioning autistic moves toward *indistinguishability from (our) peers* (that is, toward erasure),¹⁴ and generates value—social and material—accordingly. That is, the high-functioning autistic is one deemed capable of making profits and friends. The low-functioning autistic, in contrast, may be expelled from the realm of the adult and of the human entirely, marked as dependent on, and thus subordinate to, others in their midst. This is the boogeyman imagined by Autism Speaks and other eugenic campaigns against autistic life: the low-functioning and visibly disabled autistic is imagined as "stolen" or "possessed" by a disease exiling them from *real life*.¹⁵ Chillingly, this depiction of autistics as possessed and unreal have become conceptual shortcuts for justifying our murder.¹⁶

While eugenics is the inarguable *raison d'être* for marking persons as "low-functioning," a subtler, yet still deeply harmful, annihilationist rhetoric also accompanies functioning label discourse, one that I choose to map onto my myriad Zoom U apologies. That is, it is important to remember that we who are marked as "high-functioning" are marked as such aspirationally. If "disability" is constructed primarily through associations of negativity and

lack, one might consider the “low-functioning” subject to embody that imagined lack, and the “high-functioning” subject to be laboring in a continuous attempt to disavow it. Conscious attempts on our behalf to do so are known as “masking,” a term that has, since March 2020, elicited some darkly-humorous confusion.¹⁷ Masking, in essence, is the concealment of visibly-neurodivergent (and specifically autistic) behavior in an attempt at “passing” in(to) social contexts in which it is not safe or beneficial to be neurodivergent. We learn to mask particular behaviors out of survival or preference, usually a combination of the two. Masking, like other methods of “passing,” is not a marker of privilege but an indication of embodied danger. A life lived masking is a life on the edge, a life spent fleeing classrooms for “bathroom breaks” during a sensory trigger, of making myself a muzzle when I get the urge to infodump. Of sitting on my hands. Of cringing cringe¹⁸ cringe—

And perhaps at some point they—we—have shown ourselves to be passable as weird neurotypicals rather than disorderly autistics. Maybe we have spent our lives pushing ourselves into spaces where we don’t quite fit, making-do with our discomfort (I am trying to slam the fridge closed but there is too much inside!). Those of us who are not professionally diagnosed, or who were, like myself, diagnosed as adults, lived this squeezing-passing life without even knowing it. Others are subjected to abusive therapy in an attempt to traumatize them into compliance. We are, regardless, inconveniences, missed stitches in the fabric of social (and classroom) life. Too quiet, too loud, inappropriate, and off-topic. Our “high-functionality” is not a compliment, but a threat: it rests upon the presumption that our autistic attributes might be educated, trained out of us. That within the four brick walls of the (educational) institution, we, too, might graduate from autistic life to *real* life, where peeing is a privilege we must beg for and we must raise our hands to speak. That there is no stimming in the classroom, no side-conversations, and certainly no breaks. We were to be here, now, all the time, dough pounded to (com)pliance.

When my graduate program floated the idea of continuing virtual colloquia into the 2021–22 academic year, my hand was the first in the air to argue in its favor. I had been sitting for close to two hours in an introductory meeting, my first in-person since the start of my program. Shoes clicked against the floor; someone near me clicked their pen. The meeting would, I knew, end later than the scheduled time, but when? I didn’t know, and the unknowing nauseated me. *With this nausea, what will I do at lunch?* I had asked myself, listening to several staff set up our catered meal in the next room. My heart began to pound. My hands, to shake. Midway, I had left for the bathroom. I was sure I could hear someone behind me, following me, as if to accuse me of everything I was.

“The virtual colloquia are so much more accessible,” I told the people in my program. Someone was still clicking their pen. I felt slightly lightheaded. “I mean, I know as someone

who is pretty noise-sensitive, I appreciate having other attendees muted when the presentation is happening, and having the ability to adjust the speaker's volume myself. Plus, I'm able to move around and take breaks without disrupting anything. And if any of us gets sick or hurt, we'd be able to watch from home.

"It's a win-win for everyone," I concluded redundantly.

Nods all around, though the only other person who spoke up was a friend and fellow queercrip, over-talker, and talker-over. Through two layers of masks, they, immunocompromised, echoed all I'd said. We talked about critical disability studies at the subsequent lunch, with ample space between our bodies, our mouths sporting salty rings of perspiration.

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In the summer of 2021, during that brief, early period of post-vaccine freedom, there came a spate of articles all anxious about "our" return to school, to work, to *real life*. Writers and commenters feared a regression in their social skills, a newfound inability to cope with the demands of the office or classroom given their new awareness of other possibilities. I overhear the phrase, "I don't know how to talk to people anymore," as I walk, alienated, down physical hallways crowded with students. In this tender period, they are like me: small, wiry colts on quaking feet.

These new people are easier to talk to. These new people are a little more queercrip than they were before. This is in part due to the magnitude of collective trauma to which we have been exposed since March 2020, new and renewed caregiving responsibilities, and, for many, their first-ever encounters with medical abuse and neglect. It is also, in part, due to the transformed modality through which we learned to communicate, a Zoomed-in one which allows side-chats, hand-raises, mute and off-camera functions. Zoom has restructured our interactions in ways conducive to increased neurodiversity, simply by adding more communicative channels. It provided us, too, with a common language for discussing accommodations previously unimaginable: Why not attend from home? Why limit participation to verbal speech alone? Why must my body be *in* a space in order to be *of* it?

I explain: Sometimes, everything happens too much. *Classrooms suffused with pesky particles prove toxic, dangerous, and even deadly. Even absent COVID, the sights and sounds and smells of collective study prove unbearable. In my in-person classes today, I wish, sometimes, to mute it all.* I've found myself itching for the chat function in a particularly generative class, wanting to instantly send out a referenced text. I explain to

skeptics the way that Zoom worked for me, the exponential increase in my ability to “network” as a graduate student once networking could be done remotely, and now that myself and my abled, neurotypical counterparts could meet on virtual common-ground.

Zoom keeps me *me*.
Zoom makes me / (more) autistic.
That is, Zoom keeps me / autistic.

I celebrate a shift to virtual learning not in spite of its failures, but because of them: these failures allow us to better engage with the cracks in normative educational practice, not only because they become more visible, but because many astute crip-critics now have greater access to the means of knowledge-production and academic discourse. If my entering a PhD program meant entering, as a participant, an ongoing scholarly conversation, then Zoom University failed me in the very best way: inside the impossibility of “real” graduate school was the possibility of intellectual transformation. Failure can be possibility. Anyone can fail, because anyone is possible.¹⁹

Today, despite our halting return to “real-life” class, I pursue not only the collaborative possibilities occasioned by the pandemic specifically, but also those which our Zoomified circumstances have made available. A longtime social media acquaintance, Ulysses C. Bougie, and I became friends and collaborators and kinda-sorta-queer-quoi-aro²⁰ online date(?)mates. We teach and learn not through texts, but through *texts*: “not standard, MLA-formatted 8.5 × 11 sheets of paper (whether tangible or digital)”²¹ but midnight blue-bubbled infodumps, unwieldy voice memos, or the occasional voice/video call. We have taken this new normal(ization) of long-distance scholarship and made scholarly coupledness. In my own teaching, I have destabilized my own prioritization of verbal participation in class discussion, allowing students to earn participation credit by uploading their notes to a class Google Drive, a practice which also allows students absent from class not to fall behind. As a student, I continue to fire off messages related to classroom discussion, though off Zoom, it *isn't quite the same*.

I still hold my office hours online, and people visit, because now, to visit is not to plod anxiously across campus, but simply to click a link. I hope at some point to teach entirely online, where I can sit comfortably with my students / knowing
they learn behind my back.

For now, I will let students, armed with pre-typed questions, into my personal meeting room. They fear they will not pass (through) the course—the year—the architecture that seeks to fix them. They will attempt to compensate for what they have learned to perceive as *lack*: the “inferiority” of Zoom and the connections made with it, the “inadequacy” of the social and intellectual projects fostered in a virtual environment. And above all, they are so, so sorry for asking too much of me, as we navigate together new ways of teaching and

learning. They will barrel through their lists, apologizing, *sorry if that's too much*. In reply, I tell them, "Thanks for coming. I'm so glad you're here."

Notes

1. Here, I refer to obstacles—financial, material, social—placed in my way by cisheteropatriarchal, ableist, capitalist systems that seek intentionally to fail marginalized people. I refuse to participate in a "supercrip" (see Clare) discourse of personal achievement that elides the human-made nature of our inaccessible world. Eli Clare, *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015). ↩
2. Ellen Samuels, "Six Ways of Looking at Crip Time," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2017): <https://doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v37i3.5824>. ↩
3. Mel Baggs, "Nice Lady Therapists and Their War against Human Emotion: Class, Disability, and Culture," *Cussin' and Discussin'*, June 7, 2018, <https://cussinanddiscussin.wordpress.com/2018/05/04/nice-lady-therapists-and-their-war-against-human-emotion-class-disability-and-culture/>. ↩
4. In *Authoring Autism*, M. Remi Yergeau further discusses autistic theory-of-mind (namely, the presumption that autistic people are pathologically self-centered and unable to understand others' feelings and motivations) in relation to rhetoric. An autistic rhetorician himself, Yergeau keeps their tongue planted firmly in their cheek. M. Remi Yergeau, *Authoring Autism: On Rhetoric and Neurological Queerness* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018). ↩
5. David T. Mitchell, Sharon L. Snyder, and Linda Ware, "'{Every} Child Left Behind': Curricular Cripistemologies and the Crip/Queer Art of Failure," *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 8, no. 3 (2014): 297. ↩
6. Merri Lisa Johnson and Robert McRuer, "Introduction: Cripistemologies and the Masturbating Girl," *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 8, no. 3 (2014): 254. ↩
7. Mitchell, Snyder, and Ware, "{Every} Child Left Behind," 297–298. ↩
8. Jack Halberstam, *Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 2. ↩
9. For further discussion of queercrip approaches to "class participation," see Stacey Waite, "Andy Teaches Me to Listen: Queer Silence and the Problem of Participation," *Writing on the Edge* 24, no. 1 (2013): 63–74. ↩
10. Critiques of disabled bodyminds as inherently "lacking" in comparison to our abled counterparts are foundational to disability studies. See Rosemarie Garland-Thompson, "Feminist Disability Studies," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, no. 2 (2005): 1557. ↩
11. Jennifer Nicole Foster, Twitter, June 29, 2021, 4:22pm. https://twitter.com/philoso_foster/status/1409970565721432067?s=20 < https://twitter.com/philoso_foster/status/1409970565721432067?s=20> . ↩
12. @jillianweise, Twitter, August 16, 2021, now deleted. ↩
13. Stacey Waite. "Cultivating the Scavenger: A Queerer Feminist Future for Composition and Rhetoric," *Peitho Journal* 18, no. 1 (2015): 51. ↩
14. Shaun May, "On Silence and Autism," *Performance Research* 23, no. 4–5 (2018): 425–427, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2018.1507716> < <https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2018.1507716>> . ↩
15. See Zephyr Ash Ostrowski, "Things Left Unsaid: 'I Am Autism 10 Years Later,'" September 13, 2019, <https://thinkingautismguide.com/2019/09/things-left-unsaid-i-am-autism-10-years.html>. ↩

16. See ASAN, "Anti-Filicide Toolkit," *Autistic Self Advocacy Network*, January 12, 2015. <https://autisticadvocacy.org/2015/01/2015-day-of-mourning-vigils> < <https://autisticadvocacy.org/2015/01/2015-day-of-mourning-vigils>> . ↩
17. Ryan Boren, "Autistic Burnout: The Cost of Masking and Passing," *Ryan Boren*, January 26, 2017, <https://boren.blog/2017/01/26/autistic-burnout-the-cost-of-coping-and-passing> < <https://boren.blog/2017/01/26/autistic-burnout-the-cost-of-coping-and-passing>> . ↩
18. Eden, "Cringe Culture Is Fundamentally Ableist," *Autisticats*, accessed December 17, 2021, https://theautisticats.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/9/6/129686841/cringe_culture_is_fundamentally_ableist.pdf < https://theautisticats.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/9/6/129686841/cringe_culture_is_fundamentally_ableist.pdf> . ↩
19. I note that these "possibilities" might not qualify as generatively subversive or remotely desirable: they can and do include crisis, distress, and "lives gone haywire"; Merri Lisa Johnson, "Bad Romance: A Crip Feminist Critique of Queer Failure," *Hypatia* 30, no. 1 (2015): 264. ↩
20. Our partnership rejects the typical delineation between "romantic" and "platonic," and indicates an overall disidentification with the category of romantic desire. For a detailed history of quoi, see Coyote, "Quoiro / WTFromantic: A Brief Timeline of Disidentification with & Personal Rejection of Romantic Orientation," *The Ace Theist*, March 19, 2019, <https://theacetheist.wordpress.com/2019/01/04/quoiro-wtfromantic-a-brief-timeline-of-disidentification-with-personal-rejection-of-romantic-orientation/> < <https://theacetheist.wordpress.com/2019/01/04/quoiro-wtfromantic-a-brief-timeline-of-disidentification-with-personal-rejection-of-romantic-orientation/>> . Bougie further discusses aromantic creative production in "Composing Aromanticism," (master's thesis, University of Missouri, 2021), <https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/handle/10355/85832> < <https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/handle/10355/85832>> . ↩
21. Hillery Glasby. "Making It Queer, Not Clear," *Re/Orienting Writing Studies: Queer Methods, Queer Projects* (Utah State University Press, 2019), 24. ↩

Author Information



[sarah] Cavar

[sarah] Cavar is a PhD student in Cultural Studies and Science & Technology Studies at the University of California, Davis. Their primary interests include trans, Mad, and critical disability studies, particularly in conversation with poetic and speculative ways of knowing/writing.

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